

MR. W. B. JACKLING, SEATTLE, WASH.,

AUGUST 9, 1895.

(Interviewed by Richard Rathbun).

Q. This is what we want; the character of the fishing at Point Roberts and the kind of fish they take and what they do with them.

A. Well, I started in by saying that I was prejudiced against trap fishing; my reason for being prejudiced is the number of fish they are destroying. I claim for every ton of salmon that is caught and canned that there is at least a ton or ton and a half of other food fishes destroyed.

Q. Well, now, what are those other fish?

A. They are herring, shad, trout, halibut, cod, sturgeon, smelt, and flounders, that I noticed particularly. And also salmon destroyed -- the white ones -- that is white meated salmon, because they will catch these large spring salmon, and probably one-half of the spring salmon or over will be the white meated ones, and those salmon the Company are unable to sell, and hence will be thrown away.

Q. Now, do they find as large a proportion of the white salmon in the spring as that?

A. Yes; it seems to me, during the month I was there, in the month of June, up to the 7th of July, the catch of spring salmon, -- there was a continual catch of the large spring salmon, and just about July, in the first of the month, the sockeye salmon begin to come in in small numbers, but the catch of spring salmon as they come, the proportion of white and red will be about equal, or perhaps a few more white salmon than red, but it was about equal. I tried to find out from Kirby and from different ones what was the cause of it; if it was a male or female salmon, but they did not seem to know, or did not care to tell.

Q. I was laboring under the impression that the white spring salmon run more in the fall. We talked with several cannerymen on that question, and they seemed to think that the white salmon ought to be used by the canneries, and thought they would readily find a sale for them if they would pack them and label them plain; would sell them at a lower price,

if need be, and get a special market for them. We talked with several cannerymen down through that region and on Puget Sound, and they were inclined to think that a trade could be worked up.

A. The white salmon is a food fish. It is a superior fish to the sockeye salmon as a food fish; that is, I have never seen them canned and dont know anything about them that way, but to use both fish to cook, the white spring salmon and the sockeye salmon, any person I have ever seen will prefer the white spring salmon.

Q. I understand that the only difference in the canning of the fish, the only objection made by the people buying those fish is the color.

A. Yes; it is not the flavor, but the color. Of course the sockeye salmon is a magnificent looking salmon when it is canned, and the other salmon to compare them canned are not nice looking.

Q. Certainly the spring salmon is superior to the sockeye.

A. Oh, undoutbedly; I dont think there is

any doubt in anybody's mind about that.

Q. And that shows what effect color has in such matters; they can sell an inferior fish because it has a brighter color.

A. Yes; they simply sell the color; dont sell the fish, but the color.

Q. Had they begun to work at Point Roberts early in June?

A. They had that cannery at Point Roberts working, and I judge they canned the red spring salmon -- commenced about the 15th of June; the first lot of spring salmon that appeared and were brought in was caught on the west side trap, and the first catch was 200 spring salmon and a few steelheads and a few sockeyes, one or two; and out of that 200 spring salmon I think there was 50 or 60 that were thrown away, and probably 3 tons of other fish. Of course it would be hard to estimate exactly, but I should judge about 3 tons of other fish. A great number of the largest herring I have ever seen. I was so interested in the matter that I went into the scow where they had capsized the boat and picked up 2 buckets full of herring weighing from 1 1/2 to 2 lbs. each. They

dumped all the fish in the scow regardless of the kind, except the dog fish, which they immediately collected and threw away, but all the rest they dumped in the scow. The halibut they took gaffs and pulled them in the scow, and the larger fish the same way. They throw them in the scow to get rid of them and when they come around they gradually pick them out and throw the halibut and those overboard, and when they reach the cannery they take the herring out and dump the other fish overboard. They have the ling cod, and then they have another fish they call the true cod. Of course I was confused about the names.

Q. Did they catch many shad?

A. Well, I should judge they caught at one time about 100 shad; I saw about that number in the scow from one haul. They caught quite a number of trout.

Q. You mean brook trout?

A. Well; they called them trout; they were probably from 6 to 12 inches long.

Q. Do you think it would be possible for them to take the salmon out from the other fish readily?

A. Well, it would be possible, but it would entail an expense on them of course.

Q. How much expense?

A. Well, that I dont know. It would in taking the salmon from the boat. I understand the Company people to empty a boat in an hour, and it would take them 3 hours if, instead of just removing the salmon, they had to remove the other fish.

Q. It would probably not increase the expense 3 times, because the men are employed anyway.

A. Yes; but they would have to have more men to get around to their different traps.

Q. How, did the salmon associate with the other fish in the traps when they were hauling them up, did the salmon keep to the surface?

A. Yes, the salmon would keep to the surface as much as possible. Did you notice the fish were continually circling around, and they dont seem to bother about the other fish with them. I remember one trap they hauled up, there was 3 sharks, one was 13 feet long, and the shark and the salmon were swimming around there side by side, and a halibut along ahead of

the shark, and they seemed to have no fear of one another. They seemed to be perfectly satisfied and the only desire was to get free, and I presume then there would have been quite a scurrying among the different fish.

Q. The question is whether that net cannot be lifted in some way as to separate the fish. Now, in Lake of the Woods, which is the biggest sturgeon fishery in the world, and where they have about 2500 pound nets and are catching from one over a ton of dressed sturgeon to a lift. I went out with them in the boats and saw them handling them. The net is lifted; they dont dump the fish into the boat, but gaff them in, and the net is lifted in the ordinary way; then they gaff the sturgeon into the boat and the remainder of the fish which they dont want they turn right out -- just turn the bunt of the net over the side of the net. There, of course, there is no tide, the upper rim of the net is just above the water and they can do it. Here, of course, they lift at low water, do they?

A. Yes; they lift at any stage, but they try to get around at high water and at half tide, and they take a scow and run right into

this pot. I guess they are 8 ton scows, and they run them right into the pot, and they gather the net on the side and carry it over and when they get ready they lift the whole thing and dump the whole business into that scow. I asked Mr. Kirby why it would be impossible to take and have another bottom for that pot with meshes larger yet -- have the meshes large enough to hold salmon and at the same time allow these small fish to escape. "Oh," he says, "it dont make any difference about those little fish; we dont catch but a few of them". Well, I was annoyed to see the number of herring and smelt, and afterwards I saw there was a number of other fish that could not possibly escape.

Q. In taking salmon, could they take the salmon out without killing the smaller fish, which are more delicate?

A. I think they could, even with a dip net.

Q. Could they dip the salmon out with a dip net?

A. Oh, yes; I dont know whether you call it a dip net, but there is a line on each end and it is deeper in the center, and they drop



that net down and lift it up and dump it into the scow, and they keep on that way until all the salmon are removed, and it seems easier for them to drop the net than to dump them, and that is all the reason I could see for destroying the small fish. The dip net is probably about 6 feet wide and about 9 feet long. They catch quite a number of sturgeon there -- quite a number of tons of sturgeon -- and sell them to Wright. He had a little place about as large as this room with 4 piles driven in and a net inside of that, and he will take the sturgeon alive and dump them in there and then haul them over by wagon to the Canada side and ship them to New York. At first he would not take a sturgeon that was less than 8 feet long, but finally he took sturgeon not less than 6 feet long; and then they had to be all alive. I guess Mr. Kirby had the privilege of selling these sturgeon for himself, and Wright refused to take them unless they were brought alive, and it is quite a hard thing to keep a sturgeon 10 or 12 feet long in a small place with other fish and keep them alive, so they would gaff them and

bring them up dead, and in a few hours they would become useless and then they would throw them overboard.

Q. Did Mr. Wright make caviar at all?

A. I think not. I am satisfied that he did not. He did not make caviar I know positively.

Q. That is the greatest value of the sturgeon.

A. Yes; Mr. Kirby is a lake fisherman and he was explaining to me the way they made caviar and the trouble it was, and how valuable it was after it was made. It is an outrage in my estimation. Now, I am speaking from my own point of view, and it is an outrage when people engage in any business, no matter what it is -- why, how quickly people would become wild if a ranchman had a drove of cattle and would drive them in and there was a hundred head of horses among them and a hundred head of sheep and a hundred head of deer, and would kill the beef cattle and throw the horses, sheep and deer overboard and say, I don't want those, I want the beef cattle. Of course, as I say, I am

prejudiced against trap fishing; I think it is wrong in the first place; I think it would be better -- I will tell you the truth about my view of it. I think it would be better for a number of men with nets to catch those fish at Point Roberts than it would be for a company with 8 or 10 traps to catch them with 40 men. That is the reason I came to think about it in the first place. I thought that there was something radically wrong if a man could build a trap out there in the water at a cost of \$5,000 and do the same next year; they must make a tremendous amount of money to be able to do that and I thought if there was 50 or 60 men here with nets, there must be a living for those men and when we began to go around the traps in the boat, and I saw this number of men, and the large herring they were catching, I went to the captain of the Stewart and I says, "Harry, what do you say if we go to Drysdale and buy these fish and ship them to Seattle and different places?" I says, it is a shame to see them lost, and I says, we can do better than working on this boat, and we spoke to Mr. Kirby about it, and there was very little said about

it, and he said, these herring only last a little while, but, I says, there are tons of fish thrown away while it lasts, and I said, even though it does not, I will take the fish while it does last, but they dont seem to want any fish shipped away from there of that kind.

Q. When do the herring run there?

A. Well, that was along the middle of June.

Q. Do they run in July at all?

A. Very few of them run in July. I was only there until the 7th of July, but the trap I saw lifted last was about the 5th of July, and there was quite a few herring then, and the shad seemed to be getting there. In July I saw the most shad, and they were magnificent fish, but they were thrown away, only a few being taken out for different parties who wished them. Young Mr. Wadhams, of ~~Semiahmoo~~ Semiahmoo he happened to be there and took 8 or 10, but a few were herring, and put them on a string for Mr. Drysdale, with some trout, and the rest were thrown away. Mr. Wadhams has a son foreman of a cannery at Semiahmoo, and also a son foreman at the Point Roberts cannery.

Q. What is the size of the mesh, do you remember, in the pots?

A. No, I don't remember, but it appeared extremely small to me. I did inquire the size of it, and they told me that it was something like 3 inches, and I said, my gracious! any kind of a fish can go out through a 3 inch mesh, And Mr. Wright explained to me that they take the mesh and stretch it out and pull it together, so instead of being a square mesh of 3 inches it would be less than  $3/4$  of an inch each way I should judge.

Q. Now, the question of whether a mesh could be too large is a very perplexing one. We have been fishing pound nets ourselves on Lake Erie to try that matter. The mesh used there is  $2\frac{1}{4}$  and we increased it. We had 3 sizes; 3,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and we made a miserable failure of it because we gilled all the fish. We tried the experiment thinking we could show them that they could use a large mesh, but it was awfully destructive.

A. Do you understand, the same as I do, a 3 inch mesh; they pull the mesh out at the

corners and make it 3 inches long, extended. I thought when they told me it was a 3 inch mesh that it was 3 inches square. I had an idea that a simple remedy for that would be to make that mesh larger and let all the small fish go through the mesh, and just save the big ones.

Q. Would not the smelt go through that mesh?

A. Well, they did not seem to; they seemed to be caught there in quite numbers. And of course the herring I spoke about were the larger herring; you can tell that a 1 1/2 lb. herring would be 8 or 10 inches long and quite deep through the body, and it seemed to be able to go through the mesh, but it dont go through.

Q. On the lakes the fish will not go through the mesh until they begin to lift them, and then they make a dart and become entangled, but there the fish see the obstruction and just circle around looking for a big outlet, but when you begin to lift the net, then they rush to the other side without looking to see where they are going.

A. In speaking of dog fish, they are a fish that a man naturally desires to kill just

as you would kill a whale. If you hook a dog fish in the water you would kill it just the same as you would kill a whale. Those fish are valuable to some extent, and I saw them catch 3,000 dog fish and take them up and throw them away, and I understood they caught between 3,000 and 4,000. And there was some Italian fishermen there in sloops and they asked for those fish; that they would take them out of the boat and empty them into their sloop and use the livers for oil, and Kirby said all right, and those fishermen took the dog fish out of the scow and loaded their sloop down; they were just under 5 tons, to clear the law; and they filled both of the sloops, so that the men had to pull them along carefully to get them around the sand spit so they could take the livers out. Now, that first lot of dog fish were thrown away. That is why I base my opinion -- and it was simply from observation -- that at least a ton or ton and a half of fish were destroyed for every ton of fish that were put up; for every ton of salmon that are canned there was a ton and a half of food fish destroyed, besides sharks, dog fish, and such things as that.

Q. Now, the only trap net that I saw come up on the shore was the one at the cannery; is that right?

A. That is the only one I guess there is goes up on the shore. There is high water beyond there, and open water, but the open space is very short.

Q. They had the net put up to high water mark?

A. Well, when I was there they did not do that, and I said then, there is some chance for 1 or 2 fish to get away; and he says, yes, behind all these traps there is an open space, and this is the nearest one in.

Q. They had a loose net attached to the inner end and it ran up on the beach to high water mark, and it shut off everything.

A. I spoke of that net on the west side, and it appeared to me to be about at least 100 yards that was open behind it, and I said, well, you dont close in behind that; and Kirby says, oh, no, we leave that open; we only catch about one fish in every thousand that comes along here. I asked Mr. Kirby so many questions that I guess he was annoyed and did not like to



answer the questions. Of course, Mr. Kirby claims -- and at first I thought he was perfectly right - that the salt water is the place to catch salmon; this idea of going up the river, and you can build a net across the river and catch them all; and then we went on to speak of a man on the Fraser River, and he says every Saturday morning until Sunday night at 6 o'clock they are not allowed to fish, and he said this old canneryman would start out Sunday afternoon, and he had been on the river so long he could <sup>gauge</sup> ~~gauge~~ the gait of the fish up the river, and Sunday afternoon he would take his tug boat and get ready and take the boats up the river about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and get in a position where he supposed the salmon had arrived, and would wait, and just at 6 o'clock would drop his nets and drift down the river and capture all the fish that had gone up.

Q. Well, that is true to some extent. But a large share of the fish that are taken at the Fraser River are taken in salt water outside the mouth of the river. With gill nets you cannot fish for salmon in clear water, and can only fish where the tide water comes down, and it

discolors the water outside here half way to Vancouver Island, and south beyond the boundary line. Of course they only fish to the boundary line. And they can fish north to Burrard Inlet and sometimes as far as the mouth of Howe Sound; but I was surprised to see the extent to which that fishery was carried on in the salt water outside the river. Nearly all the fishing done in the river was done below Westminster; the amount taken above is very little. Now, one remedy, of course, so far as the salmon is concerned, is to oblige them to have a space between all the pots, and not to allow them to run a continuous string of 3 pots, as they do there from the shore out a mile.

A. I think they extend farther than that, dont they?

Q. It is not quite a mile according to the survey. I got it from Carr & McCord, who are working for the Indians there. And that thing is entered in the court here with Judge Hanford, and it is a little less than a mile.

A. It looked extremely long to me, I know. I used to think to myself if these people would hire a tremendous tug boat to go along here and

sweep this whole thing off what a grand thing it would be. The distance from the land to the outside of Wright's net is about 1 1/4 mile according to Mr. Kirby.

Q. This survey did not take in the outer side of Point Roberts, and it was said the distance was 1 1/4 but, of course, there is a space between the nets and the shore.

A. I know No. 16, which is up near the boundary line, and it is quite a distance out from the shore, and there is nothing between it and the shore. They have discovered the route the salmon take; the salmon go in up around that point and then out, and they don't skirt through there because there is shallow water there, and they keep away from that shallow water to a certain extent.

Q. Now, there are 2 nets in boundary Bay in Canadian waters which belong to the Anglo-British Columbia Company, and we understood that those nets took nothing last year, and they had taken nothing this year up to the time we were there, but we understood they had taken some fish after had left, and that would rather indicate that the fish scarcely went up

into the shallow water there; they begin to turn outwards.

A. The practical fishermen tell me there is a point at the end of Boundary Bay, and they explained to me that the fish went in there and struck out and made a circle out and came to where a man by the name of Pike was building and he claimed that they came just outside his net and then came up along and struck Good-fellow's net, and then struck along here, and then took across for the high ground of Point Roberts and then out again, and as they came past the Point of course these traps along here caught them. That is what a fisherman told me, and he was an old fellow around there, and said he had followed them for 20 years, and claimed to know something about them. I saw they were driving the piles in there, and I had an idea it would be a splendid place for a trap, but he said, no, they would not catch any fish up there as the fish did not go there without there was a very great run. I used to inquire all along what fish they were catching, and that is how I came to find out about the number of fish they caught in one day there. I was speaking

to a reporter of a paper up there, and happened to inquire by the way what number of fish the A. P. A. caught in their traps there. I had an idea that no fish would escape. Well, he says, I dont think any of them escape lately. I was over there, and Mr. Kirby claims they caught in one day 50,000. That was between the 23rd of July and the 1st of August.

Q. Did he mean in the one big net there?

A. Well, I dont know whether he meant in one net. I spoke about the west side trap. I was there when they built that trap, and it seemed to me to be placed in a position that would catch everything that came along, as the fish would naturally follow that line in moving around that point, and I spoke about that trap, and I think he told me that trap took 17,000 fish at one haul.

Q. You are talking about the trap off the light house reserve?

A. Yes, sir; right at the point; No. 12 as they call it. He said they loaded all the scows they had around there and then had to send for more scows; 17,000 fish at one haul is a tremendous haul.

Q. What do they do with those fish; they could not can them?

A. Well, when they get more than they can can, just at the outer end of the pot they have what they call a spiller, and they turn them in there and keep them there, and then as the cannery runs out, and they dont catch any fish they use these up. Last year, when the salmon run was all ended they had fish enough from this spiller to run those canneries 2 weeks. The idea is this, in moving the fish from the nets to the spiller they have to take them in the scows. That was the way it was when I was there; they took them in the scows and then dumped them out again; but Kirby was arranging some plan so they could pick up the corner of the net and scoop them into the spiller. It seems they had not caught but few sockeyes up to this time, and they took all those 17,000 fish to the canneries at one time, and they made 3 or 4 hauls that day, and this man claimed there was over 50,000 fish taken that day. Last year they caught at No. 12, 20,000 fish in one day. At Blaine I spoke of this immense destruction of fish, and they were quite friendly,

of course, to the canneries, and some people said, what is the difference about the fish; nobody ever knew they were there before, and we dont use them anyhow; what is the difference if they do destroy them. And then I spoke of these dog fish, and said there was 3,000 dog fish thrown away at one time, and from each one of them they might have gotten a liver, and it takes about 50 to make a gallon of oil, and that oil sells for 30 cents a gallon. And one fellow said, it made no difference; nobody used the dog fish, and if they could catch 3,000 dog fish, all the better as nobody used them.

Q. I wonder if there is any way of getting at the catch of fish at Point Roberts?

A. Well, I know they keep a tally on the different traps. Mr. Kirby gets a percentage of the fish caught, I think, and I think he is paid \$1200 a year, and then a percentage on the fish caught, or a percentage on the number of fish canned. Now, each trap as the fish are caught is credited with so many fish; that is with the number of fish taken out of it. That is a wonderful combination, that concern in San Francisco. There is what they call the

salters; that is men who are located on fishing rights and they rely on salting salmon and barreling them. Well, up in Alaska there was some of these salters got in ~~there~~ there and located on places that the A.P.A. wanted, and they could not get rid of those men, so they came to the conclusion that the only way to get rid of them was to ship up 8,000 barrels to Alaska and fill them and sell them for \$4.00 a barrel, and that is \$2.00 less than these men can sell them for, and those men have their barrels up there and everything, and it will just break them. I would honestly like to be able to just go there and remain, and take a small boat and pull around those different traps, and after a short time a man could tell the principal fish, and just keep an account of the kinds of fish that were thrown away and the kinds that they caught, just for comparison.

Q. I wonder if Mr. Goodfellow keeps track of the thing enough to give us information?

A. My opinion of Mr. Goodfellow, and the position he has taken this last few years, I thinks he keeps close track of all that is done



there.

Q. He has a good deal of feeling against the Company.

A. Oh, yes; he is very bitter. I wish you could have been there and seen those fish, and I presume you would have felt just the same as I did about it, and seen the number of fish that were caught and thrown away.

Q. Another thing, how long do they keep their traps in there? What is the canning season at Point Roberts and Semiahmoo?

A. Well, they commence with the run of spring salmon, and I think they quit in November sometime.

Q. Then they must can later the humpback?

A. Yes; the humpback and the steelhead. They can some steelhead and the silver salmon also.

Q. Had they done so hitherto? I thought they closed earlier heretofore?

A. No, they closed late last year. That is what I gathered from the men around the cannery there, that they closed late last year.

Q. The fact of the case is you have one tremendous river here which ends at Cape

Flattery.

A. Yes, that is what it is.

Q. And the whole thing must be considered as one piece of water, the Fraser River and all, as the sockeye only goes up the Fraser River to spawn.

A. Is not that queer! I noticed at Utsalady that they shipped some sockeyes up; that is to Seattle, and the only way I could tell the sockeye from the other salmon was by the fishermen down there, but I was anxious to learn the difference. You take a sockeye by the tail and you cannot hold him, but you can take any other salmon and catch him right by the tail and you can hold him between your thumb and finger, but the sockeye you cannot; they are so thick there that they slide right through your hands -- and so I got so I could tell the sockeye. A fisherman who was working at the cannery at Port Angeles told me about it. He has been on the Sound for a number of years, and he understood the salmon thoroughly, and Mr. Hume is relying on that man now. He is an Italian, I should judge, or an Austrian.

There was none of those traps finished but one at Point Roberts on July 10. The No. 12 was the only one that was finished then, and they have finished all the rest since then.

Q. Judge Hanford said he did not feel he was justified in preventing the Company fishing on the representation they had made that they had expended so much money this year, but that in case they had destroyed the Indian fishing the Indians had recourse to the civil courts. But it is only for this season, and it was on that representation, that the A. P. A. has expended so much money this year; \$50,000. I think?

A. It was \$80,000.

Q. The A. P. A. are very cautious. First of all, they are sure of their holdings there.

A. I had an idea that their holdings did not amount to anything at all.

Q. They leased from Mrs. Waller, and they are secure as long as she is, and the Interior Department has upheld her claim. Now, if the War Department wants to retain that as a military reservation they can do so, and as the holdings were obtained beforehand the Government

would have to pay her.

A. The great trouble with Mrs. Waller there, they were trying to tear off a chunk up here and come down here and take another patch, in order to get the point and also to shut out Goodfellow. Then Mr. Goodfellow resisted that with every energy, and he has held on there by the shoe strings, and he is a determined old man, I think.

Mr. Kirby seemed to know just when the fish would come. When I was there there was a cry, the sockeyes are coming, and Mr. Kirby said , the sockeyes will be here in 14 days, and I said how ~~xxx~~ do you know that, Mr. Kirby? and he said, well, at that time the tide will be just so and so and the moon will be just so and so. Then, he says, the run will last about 15 days.

This Italian told me the number of years he had been on the Sound, and he said he heard so much of this run around Point Roberts, that he thought he would go over there and see if that man knew any more about the fish than he did, and he told Kirby he would hire out for a month, and found out he was a good fisherman, but he found he could not learn much, so came away.

Q. You dont know whether they have had good catches since they took that 50,000?

A. I have not heard. The only way would be for someone to be right there, and know. Nobody would ever have known about that 50,000 fish they caught unless the man had been right there. What makes me more sure is that a reporter who was appointed to take testimony in the case before Judge Hanford had been there and he was telling me about the number of fish they caught. He belongs in Whatcom.

(Mr. Jackling, of Seattle, was for a time this season engineer of the tug Stewart, which was engaged by the A. P. A. at Point Roberts in the transportation of fish to the cannery there and at Semiahmoo. Harry K. Struve, of Seattle, was the captain of the tug).